

Week Ending Friday, November 6, 1998

**Letter to Congressional Leaders  
Transmitting the National Security  
Strategy Report**

*October 29, 1998*

*Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)*

As required by section 603 of the Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986, I am transmitting a report on the National Security Strategy of the United States.

Sincerely,

**William J. Clinton**

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Newt Gingrich, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Albert Gore, Jr., President of the Senate. An original was not available for verification of the content of this letter. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

**Remarks to the Clergy  
in Jamaica, New York**

*October 30, 1998*

Thank you so much. Please be seated. Dr. Walker, Dr. Forbes, Reverend McCall—[laughter]—he was doing pretty good, wasn't he? Bishop Quick, Reverend Sharpton; my good friend Congressman Schumer and his wife, Iris, and their daughter, Jessica. I think Congressman Towns is here. President Fernando Ferrer, the Bronx Borough president; Virginia Fields, I think may be here, the Manhattan Borough president; Judith Hope, our State chair. I'd like to thank the St. Paul Community Baptist Church Choir for singing Red Foley's old hymn for me. Thank you very much. It was quite wonderful.

When I was a little boy, I used to listen to Mahalia Jackson sing that song. And when I was a young man and living in England, I went to the Royal Albert Hall in London to hear Mahalia Jackson sing not long before she died. It was 29 years ago, and it was an amazing thing. She was singing, "Precious

Lord." At the end of her concert, there were all these young people like me there. But most of them weren't like me, most of them were British; they didn't grow up listening to all this, you know. And these kids stormed the stage at the end, almost like she was a rock star. They were five and six deep, screaming for her to keep singing.

And you reminded me of all that just a moment ago, and I thank you for that. Weren't they wonderful? [Applause] They were great. Thank you.

Let me say to all of you, I thank Carl McCall for his leadership and for what he said. I have tried to be a friend to all Americans, without regard to race or income or religion or standing in life. I am grateful that in an economy in which we have the lowest unemployment rate in 28 years that the African-American poverty rate is the lowest we have ever measured. I am grateful that the tax credit that Congressman Schumer helped me pass in 1993, the earned-income tax credit, cutting the taxes of lower income working people, when put with the minimum wage, has lifted over one million African-Americans out of poverty through their own efforts of work.

I am grateful to have had the chance to double the number of small business loans to African-Americans and dramatically increase support for historically black colleges, to have had the largest number of African-Americans serving in the Cabinet in my two administrations by far than any President and 54—54—Federal judges.

I say all that to make this point—maybe not as well as Dr. Forbes did. I don't seek any credit for that. It was an honor for me to do. It was something I wanted to do. It was a desire born of the life I have lived and the people I have known and the things I have seen that I like and the things I have seen that I deplored and the potential of people too long untapped that I was determined to do what I could to lift up.

But it all happened because of the American system of democracy. Yesterday, all over America all kinds of people were watching John Glenn go up in space at 77 years old. Kind of made us all think we had something to look forward to—[laughter]—77 years old. But you may not have thought of this if you were sitting in front of your television watching that: How did he get up in space? Oh yes, a rocket took him, all right. He got up in space because the Congress of the United States and the President of the United States, over time, but especially in these last 6 years, when we had such budget problems, supported a mission for the United States in space and believed that mission ought to have benefits for us here on Earth, whether it's learning about the environmental challenges we face or making advances in health care and prevention of health problems. In other words, at bottom, it was a citizen's decision.

So if you voted for a Member of Congress who supported the changes we made in the space program but didn't want to shut it down, wanted to keep it going, then you had your hand on John Glenn when he went up in space yesterday.

Now that's what I want you to think about. A week ago today, I was in the White House with the Prime Minister of Israel and the Chairman of the Palestinian Authority announcing the next move forward in the Middle East peace process. And I'm very grateful for the nice things people said about the role that I played, but it was my job. It's what you hired me to do. And I wanted to do it because of what I know about what is going on, my heartbreak over the loss and my hope over the potential of the region which is the home to all three of the world's great monotheistic religions. But what I want you to know is that if you liked that last Friday and it made you feel good about your country, pushing for peace, if you supported me, then you were part of that peace process.

And today we announced we had another good quarter of economic growth. And I outlined what I was going to try to do to help these countries in trouble around the world because they buy our things. We live in a world anymore where it is not just our neighbors that have to do well, down the block,

if we want to do well. Our neighbors around the world need to do well.

If we want to bring opportunity back into the neighborhoods of New York City where it hasn't happened yet, we have to have some place that would be matched up with us as partners. So if they do well in the Caribbean, if they do well in Latin America, if we have closer relations with Africa, it actually will help us also to build up our own people, a lesson that those who study the Bible will not be surprised turned out to be true. But if you liked all that, if you supported me and my economic policies, you had a hand in it. It was your prosperity.

I think of all the things Carl McCall has done as comptroller that no comptroller ever did before, all the people he tried to help—loans to 300 New York businesses, thousands of new jobs, millions available to women- and minority-owned businesses. Nobody ever did that before. In a real sense, it wasn't just him doing that. You did that. He's your hired hand just like I am. We have nothing that the people of New York and the United States don't give us under the constitutions under which we labor.

Mr. Schumer wants to be a Senator. New York has had some great Senators. Robert Wagner—so many years ago the whole framework of our labor laws protecting the dignity of working people in the workplace—Herbert Layman; Jacob Javits, a great Republican Senator; Senator Moynihan; Robert Kennedy. New York should have a Senator who can be very much in the mix of what needs to be done today and tomorrow, all the specific things, but also can help to lead the State and the Nation with a vision. He's that kind of person. I know him well, and I want you to help him.

And if you think about this election, it's about choices—clear choices. And if you vote and if the people you know and love vote, and the things you want to have happen, happen, then it's not just those of us whom you elect doing it. It's you doing it. It's being Americans in the best sense and being rewarded in the highest sense.

You know, we got some things done, some important things done, at the end of this last congressional session, but it's hard for 8 days

of progress to overcome 8 months of partisanship. And if you look ahead, we've got the largest number of children in our schools we've ever had, for finally we've got more kids in school than when I was there in the baby boom generation, taking a big burden off our generation I might add.

But as a result—and more and more of these children are immigrant children. They come from families whose first language is not English. And more and more they find themselves in these great big classrooms where the teachers can't give them the individual attention they need. And we know now that the most important factor in having enduring learning gains for children, particularly if they're poor children, is to be in a small class in the early grades with a good teacher who can individually help them get off to a good start.

So we said, we want 100,000 teachers in the early grades to take class size down to an average of 18 in the early grades. And then we've got all these wonderful old school buildings in New York with a lot of rooms and floors that aren't usable and that can't be hooked up to computers and things. And then we've got, in Florida and California, all these kids showing up and no buildings for them to be in. They're out in trailers out in the backyard somewhere, sometimes meeting in broom closets, literally. So we said we want to build or remodel 5,000 schools, because if you're going to hire the teachers and you've got the kids there anyway, they need someplace to meet. And this Congress said, "No. No. No. We don't believe in that."

But we believe in that. If we had a little more balance, just a few more Democrats, we could get 5,000 more schools for America. That's what this issue is.

One hundred sixty million Americans are in managed care, and we may well have more in the future. A lot of seniors want to be in managed care programs for Medicare because then they get a prescription drug benefit. It's a big issue.

I have never been opposed to the managed care concept because when I became President, the inflation rate in health care costs was 3 times as high as the inflation rate in the economy, and it was bankrupting businesses and individual senior citizens, and it

threatened to consume the country. So we had to have a better management of the money we were putting into health care.

But no management system should be allowed to swallow up the purpose of the endeavor. And today you've got people—heart-breaking people—who were denied the care they should have gotten because insurance company bureaucrats or accountants said, "No, you can't have it." You have people who get hurt in an accident, and instead of going to the nearest hospital emergency room, they're carted halfway across town through a bunch of red lights and waiting because that's the one covered in their plan.

You have people in a plan, and their employer changes plans when it expires, but the worker may be pregnant or the worker's spouse may be undergoing chemotherapy—to be told to change doctors in the middle of one of those streams. You ever had anybody in your family on chemotherapy? I have. You know, it's a scary thing. And families try to pull together, and they want to make light of it. We made a lot of jokes in my family when my mother was on chemotherapy. Was she going to lose her hair or not? If she did, would the wig look better than her hair? You know, you try to make them laugh. But the truth is, you're scared to death. And you wonder if the person you love is going to get so sick they won't be able to eat anymore.

And then in the middle of that, if somebody had told us, "I'm sorry. We changed carriers. Now you have to change doctors," I don't know what I would have done. But it happens. And I could give you a lot of other examples.

So we had this Patients' Bill of Rights. We said, look, we had 43 of these HMO's saying, "Mr. President, you're right." We had a national commission of all kinds of people recommending this Patients' Bill of Rights. And we tried to pass it into law because it's not fair for some HMO's to do it and others not, and then the people that aren't behaving well to get rewarded by getting more customers who are healthy with lower prices.

So we said, okay, everybody ought to—we're going to have a simple bill of rights for every patient. First of all, if your doctor tells you you ought to see a specialist, you

can see one. Secondly, if you get hurt, you ought to go to the nearest emergency room. Thirdly, if you're having treatment that's serious, you ought to be able to finish it, even if your employer changes health care providers. Fourthly, your medical records ought to be kept private and not invaded. Finally, in essence, health care decisions ultimately should be made by health care professionals and patients, not by accountants. That's what we say.

Now—[*applause*—you like that? If we had just a little more balance in the Congress, a few more Democrats, we wouldn't get beat on that Patients' Bill of Rights. If we had a few more people like Chuck Schumer in the House and in the Senate, we could give the American people a Patients' Bill of Rights.

And the same thing is true on Social Security. You've heard all this debate about saving Social Security. Well, if you're on Social Security, relax, you're okay. What we're talking about is the baby boomers are moving to retirement. When they all retire, there will only be two people working for every one person drawing Social Security. The Trust Fund will be out of money in 2032, and we'll be into the Trust Fund in about 20 years. And if we make a few little changes now, modest changes, we can change and save this system in ways that we can all live with, and Social Security will be there.

That's why I say, look, we waited 29 years to balance the books. I've worked for 6 years on it. And before the ink is even dry, the black ink, the leaders in the other party, they want to give it back in a tax cut before we save Social Security. Now it may be popular, but it's not right. It's not right. It is not right. We owe it to the next generation to make sure the baby boom generation can retire in dignity, without having to put a whopping tax increase on their children and undermine their children's ability to raise their grandchildren.

You know, I grew up with a bunch of people who were mostly middle class folks at home. A lot of them didn't go to college, out there working for a living. They could use any kind of tax cut they could get. They liked the ones we've provided already for child care and for education. And they'd like some

more. But I don't know anybody my age that is not plagued with the notion that because we're such a large generation, our retirement will put unconscionable burdens on our children and our grandchildren.

Now, that's what this whole save Social Security thing is about. The pastors here who look after the flock and think about the generation, who work all the time at getting all of us, your sheep, to think about the long-run and not just what's in front of our nose. This is an issue that you can feel deeply. And this election is not an ordinary election because this is a generational thing. We have a few more people like Congressman Schumer in the Senate and the House—give a little more balance to this thing—we can save Social Security for the 21st century.

So again I say to you, people like Carl McCall and Chuck Schumer, Ed Towns, our whole ticket, none of them get there by accident. And when they get there and do good things, we're not doing it alone. Every good thing I ever did, you had a hand in if you helped me be President. The mistakes were my fault. The good stuff you had a hand in. Don't you forget about it. And that is true of Carl McCall. That is true of Chuck Schumer. That is true of every public official.

Somebody asked me the other day, how did you ever get those folks to agree at the Wye Plantation after 8 days. I said I was determined to be the last one standing. [*Laughter*] We were up for 39 hours. I didn't do that in college. [*Laughter*] I'm too old to do it now. [*Laughter*] I kept thinking of all those Scripture verses, you know, "Let us not grow weary in doing good, for in due season, we shall reap if we do not lose heart."

I kept thinking, well, "They who wait upon the Lord will mount up with wings—[*laughter*]—run and not grow weary; walk and faint not." I almost got to the end of that verse before we got peace the other day. [*Laughter*]

Now, on Tuesday, the people that we need to be there, a lot of them will be tired. A lot of them will be hassled. A lot of them don't make much money. A lot of them have enough trouble just figuring out how to get the kids to child care or school and get back and forth from work and get the kids home

and ever have everybody in one piece by dinner time. And America is one of the countries—still—votes on a work day. It's a real hassle for them.

A lot of them depend on mass transit to get back and forth to work, and the voting place is not on the same bus line or the same subway route. It's a hassle. Just remember, everybody that doesn't show can't gripe Wednesday morning. And everybody that does show is then a part of every good thing that flows from their decision if they're in the majority.

I want you to think about how you want to feel Wednesday morning. And I want you to think about it. If you felt good during the Middle East peace process, if you felt good when John Glenn went up into space, if you felt good when I was able to tell you we were going to get 100,000 new teachers, if you felt good when I talked about those 54 Federal judges, if you believe in your heart that you have been a part of my Presidency—and I tell you you have; I wouldn't be here without you—then I ask you this one thing: Realize that this, too, is an important election, that it is not an ordinary time; it is, therefore, not an ordinary election; that what happens, all these people who will win races on Tuesday, will be a direct result, not only of how you vote but even more importantly, whether you vote.

You will come in contact with thousands of people between now and then. And when the Scripture said that, we are all admonished to render unto Caesar those things which are Caesar's, well I'm not Caesar, and we're not a dictatorship or an empire, but you know what the Bible means. It's more today. When that Scripture was written all that meant was, pay your taxes. Nobody had a vote. Nobody had a vote.

Today you've got the vote. You can actually be in the driver's seat. There is no Caesar without you—[laughter]—unless you sit it out. Our adversaries, they think a whole bunch of you will stay home. They know it's going to be a hassle. They know it will be an effort.

But you just remember every good thing that you've felt good about in the last 6 years. And you think about how you want to feel Wednesday morning. We need to reelect

Carl McCall and all America needs to know about Carl McCall, not just New York. All America needs to know about Carl.

We need to send Chuck Schumer to the Senate because all America, and not just New York, needs that. We need to get that balance back in our Congress so we can do some of these things that we can't get done now. But it all depends on you. It all depends on you.

I am more grateful than you will ever know for the friendship and the support of the people of New York, to me, to my wife, to my Vice President, to our administration; for the friendship and support of the African-American community, and especially the clergy. But the thing about this kind of work is, you never get to stop. You never get to stop.

In the last week we've had a lot to celebrate. You had your hand on John Glenn's shoulder. You had your prayers answered about the continued process of peace. You can think about your children's future with 100,000 more teachers. But there are huge fights out there left to fight—huge. And we need you.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:45 p.m. in Ballrooms B and C at the Ramada Plaza Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to human rights activist Rev. Wyatt Tee Walker, Canaan Baptist Church of Christ; James Forbes, pastor, Riverside Church; Carl McCall, New York State comptroller and U.S. Senate candidate; Bishop Norman Quick, pastor, Childs Memorial Temple, Church of God in Christ; civil rights activist Rev. Al Sharpton; Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu of Israel; and Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

## **Statement on Signing the Technology Administration Act of 1998**

*October 30, 1998*

Today I am signing into law H.R. 1274, the "Technology Administration Act of 1998." The Act strengthens the technology programs of the Department of Commerce to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

The Act will enable the Commerce Department's National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) to better serve the